

Playing through my mind also—as it has for some time—was our collective struggle with legal immigration and our Nation's struggle with addressing this problem.

For anyone wondering if I did not see or feel the real painful events of separating children from their parents at the border last week, as I curled up with my little guy, know that I did. I felt it to my soul. You see, my 8-year-old son is also an immigrant. My wife and I adopted him from Russia just before Vladimir Putin slammed the door shut for other children who could desperately use a loving home in America.

We had to come home after adoption was granted and wait out an appeal period. We had to leave our son behind and then go back and get him weeks later. So I understand the problem well and what is at stake.

America has struggled with this issue since our creation. We are a Nation of immigrants. My ancestors arrived in America during the Irish potato famine. We can't ignore immigration, both illegal and legal, any longer. The issue surrounds us every day, especially if you live in border communities, areas of large immigrant populations—legal and illegal—or resort communities or agriculture communities who depend upon guest workers to even function.

In 1986, Congress passed the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which was signed into law by President Reagan, the last major immigration legislation. This granted legal status to about 4 million illegal immigrants with a commitment to fund what was necessary to secure our borders.

However, clearly, we did not secure our borders, and that failure is why we struggle right now with this problem. Our Nation's border agents stop about 2,000 people deemed to be high risk, attempting to enter the United States from Africa and the Middle East at our southern border every year.

Does anybody care to estimate the number of people we do not apprehend and the risks they pose to our security?

A group of young people, often called the DACA population, are estimated at 1.6 to 1.8 million people and they are here, young people brought here by their parents—yes, illegally, I grant that—but the question remains: What do we do? Leave them in limbo? Leave them in fear on the edge of society?

America has an immigration system that is old-fashioned at best. Rather than doing what is necessary, like other nations have, a merit-based immigration system, we have visa lottery, family chain migration, and a refugee and asylum system that does not work—all backed up by illegal immigration that we can't address solely through deportations and hearings.

We must secure our borders now. Not some day. Not maybe.

We must end the political circus of the DACA program and fix the limbo status for the DACA population now. We must move to merit-based immigration, end the visa lottery, and end family chain migration.

There is no answer to these issues that is perfect, in the view of myself and many, because we are in a representative democracy. I don't believe perfect exists in the world.

I spent 35 years in a private business. I don't think I ever saw perfect. My spouse and children will tell you I am far from their definition of perfect. I came here to address our Nation's challenges and take those tough votes gladly because I want to make a difference.

I chatted with a more senior member at the airport Friday who commented that only 100 or 150 Members of this body are prepared to truly work on solving this problem, to compromise, and take a tough vote on immigration.

Some believe their idea is the only approach. Some have election fears. Some want to message on this issue at elections.

Less than 12,000 individuals have ever served in the House of Representatives. To all with the honor and responsibility of being in this Chamber, I say, now is the time to step up, work on this issue, compromise, tackle the dilemma, and then take a vote to move it forward to a better place.

Because, again: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

#### COMPASSIONATE, COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this week we plan on voting on a very strong bill known as the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act.

To better assess our immigration system and the security of our border, I went to the United States-Mexico border near El Paso, Texas, this weekend. I rise today to share some of the stories I heard from our Customs and Border Patrol officers and the compassion they had for these families and children they interact with.

These agents and officers had the highest on-the-job injury rate among all law enforcement groups across the country. Additionally, these officers see some of the worst conditions and are exposed to wide-ranging health risks like scabies, lice, tuberculosis, chicken pox, and many others.

Day to day, these officers are on the front lines protecting our Nation's borders. They are often stopping drug trafficking, human trafficking, and much more. They see the worst of the worst, and put their lives on the line to secure our Nation every day. In exchange for this, they are often portrayed on the national media as cruel and are compared to unthinkable, unimaginable groups from our world's history.

This is not the experience I had with them this weekend. These officers have huge hearts, and they are often given a tough task at the border. They told me story after story of how they bring personal items like teddy bears and toys

from their homes to provide to children, and oftentimes run to McDonald's and other restaurants to get food for hungry kids who had a very long, dangerous journey.

No one is denying that the situation on our Nation's border is terrible, and our agents at the border see this tragedy daily. Seeing this for myself firsthand, I quickly realized, there is no perfect fix. But it is imperative that we recognize and honor our Border Patrol agents' hard work, and do our part in Congress to pass compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform that still secures our borders and helps alleviate the situation of crisis which now exists.

#### AMERICA IS A NATION OF LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, some of the political rhetoric and political opportunism is at an all-time high of ridiculous on this issue of immigration. Let's take a step back and let's think through this, and let us reason together as Americans.

No American who I have talked to in my district in west Texas or beyond, has any problem with folks immigrating to this great Nation. We are a Nation of immigrants. But we are a Nation of laws.

And just like if I took folks out of the unemployment line and took them to your office and sat them in your office and said, you have got to hire them, or you are heartless. You don't care about them.

You would look at me like I had three heads, and you would say, they have got to go through an application process. We have got to vet them. We need to know that they have the merit to fill the job, that they are competent, that they have the moral character, that they are qualified.

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There is not a single Democrat, if I brought them people from that unemployment line, who would just hire them on account of my threats of their being heartless and any other fear tactic. Why would we be any different with the standards of citizenship in this great Nation? Why?

Most of these kids coming over here are unaccompanied, about 83 percent, and then some with their parents. There has been this recent uproar about kids coming and being separated from their parents. I don't like that. I wish it weren't the case. I am prepared to fix it. That is what we should do in Congress, fix the laws when we find something that is not working.

This President is just enforcing the laws. We haven't had a President enforce the laws. We haven't had the respect for the Constitution and the rule of law in so long that we are outraged that a President would actually just